

Appendix G

Information Sources for Wildlife and Habitat Conservation on Private Lands

With more than 50 percent of California in private ownership, private landowners play an important role in maintaining the state's wildlife diversity. Landowners who are interested in providing wildlife habitat on their lands face a variety of challenges, including inadequate technical knowledge or capacity, funding, or time to take conservation actions.

Depending on their specific situation, landowners may be receptive to different types of assistance. Some landowners prefer minimal or no government involvement. Others may need some financial incentives but prefer market-based approaches, such as conservation banking. Landowners amenable to government assistance may be interested in programs that provide technical assistance, financial assistance, or both.

This appendix lists some of the types of programs and resources that are available for private landowners.

Informational Programs and Documents

The resources below provide information about how to manage agricultural-, range-, and forest-lands in ways that are compatible with wildlife and habitat conservation.

Multiple Land Uses

California Nonpoint Source Encyclopedia

<http://www.swrcb.ca.gov/nps/encyclopedia.html>

Conservation practices to protect land and water from nonpoint sources of pollution.

Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)

Electronic Field Office Technical Guide

<http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/technical/efotg/>

Recommended practices for the conservation of soil, water, air, and related plant and animal resources.

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency National Management Measures to Control Nonpoint Source Pollution from Agriculture

<http://www.epa.gov/owow/nps/agmm/>

Information on practices to reduce pollution of surface and groundwater from agriculture.

Best Management Practices Databases

http://swrcb2.swrcb.ca.gov/stormwtr/bmp_database.html

Web links to information about stormwater management.

Salmon Safe Program

<http://www.salmonsafe.org>

Provides guidance documents, consultation, and a certification process for agricultural management practices that protect aquatic ecosystems.

Dairy Quality Assurance Program

<http://www.cdqa.org>

Provides guidance documents, consultation, and a certification process for environmental stewardship practices for dairy producers.

Croplands

University of California Conservation Tillage Workgroup

<http://groups.ucanr.org/ucct/>

Information on research related to conservation tillage production systems in California.

Rangelands

Integrated Hardwood Range Management Program

<http://danr.ucop.edu/ihrmp/allpubs.html#2guide>

Guidelines for Managing California's Hardwood Rangelands (1996), a report of the University of California, Fish and Game, and California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection.

NRCS Field Office Technical Guides

<http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/Technical/efotg/index.html>

NRCS National Range and Pasture Handbook

<http://www.glti.nrcs.usda.gov/technical/publications/nrph.html>

Publications on rangeland management.

Riparian Management Guidance

<http://californiarangeland.ucdavis.edu/Publications%20Web%20Folder/Rangeland%20Management%20Series.htm>

Publications from the University of California, Davis, Department of Plant Sciences' rangeland management series.

Rangelands of the Western United States

<http://rangelandswest.org>

A collaborative program comprising land grant universities in the Western U.S. with range extension programs that provides recommendations for management of grazing, invasive species, inventorying and monitoring, fire management, restoration, and wildlife habitat.

University of California Cooperative Extension Rangeland Watershed Program Fact Sheets

<http://danr.ucop.edu/uccelr/htoc.htm>

Watershed Resource Guide

<http://www.calcattlemen.org>

(click on "Industry Issues" > "Producer Information" > "Watershed Resources Guide")

Forestlands

NRCS National Forestry Handbook and National Forestry Manual

<http://soils.usda.gov/technical/nfhandbook> and <http://soils.usda.gov/technical/nfmanual>

Information on forest planning and harvesting on nonpublic lands.

Water Quality Management for Forest System Lands in California: Best Management Practices

http://www.fs.fed.us/r5/publications/water_resources/waterquality/water-best-mgmt.pdf

Recommended practices to protect water quality for timber management, road construction, mining, recreation, fire management, and range management.

Financial Assistance Programs

A number of programs exist to provide financial assistance, either as direct funding or tax benefits, for management practices that will conserve wildlife and habitat.

Direct Funding

Various state and federal agencies (and private sources) provide direct contributions to private landowners or landowner organizations. These include grants, cost-sharing agreements, debt forgiveness, and reimbursement of expenses. These methods are a way for the government or a private organization to shoulder some of the cost of maintaining habitat or recovering endangered species on private land. Under these types of agreements, a landowner receives financial assistance in carrying out activities intended to benefit wildlife and natural resources.

A relatively comprehensive, regularly updated guide to these programs is available on the Web:

California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection

<http://ceres.ca.gov/foreststeward/html/financial.html>

Cost-share and assistance programs for individual California land owners and Indian tribes.

Tax Benefits

There are several types of tax benefits that can benefit landowners for efforts to conserve natural resources, including deductions based on charitable donations of property and a reduction in capital gains tax on sales of conservation easements or property to a land trust or conservation agency.

Examples of tax incentive programs include:

Department of Conservation—Williamson Act

<http://www.consrv.ca.gov/DLRP/lca/index.htm>

Enables landowners to receive lowered property tax assessments if they enter into contracts with local governments to restrict parcels of their land to agricultural or open-space use.

Wildlife Conservation Board's Natural Heritage Preservation Tax Credit Program

http://www.wcb.ca.gov/Pages/nhptca_home.htm

Tax credits are available to private landowners who donate qualified land (fee title or conservation easement), water, or water rights to government agencies or designated nonprofit organizations for conservation purposes.

Reports providing an overview of federal tax benefits and summary of programs in California state government are available on the Web:

Hummon, L., and F. Casey (2005). *Status and trends in federal resource conservation incentive programs: 1996–2001*. <http://www.biodiversitypartners.org/pubs>

Defenders of Wildlife (2002). *Conservation in America: State government incentives for habitat conservation: A status report*. <http://www.biodiversitypartners.org/pubs>

Technical Assistance

Technical assistance can include education about available assistance programs, developing conservation plans, or designing on-the-ground habitat improvements.

Three key sources of local technical assistance are:

California Department of Forestry Forest Advisors

http://www.fire.ca.gov/php/rsrsc-mgt_content/downloads/20005_06ForestAdvisorlist.pdf

Assists individual landowners with land management planning, conservation practices to enhance wildlife habitat, and practices to enhance the productivity of the land. Also assists with prefire fuels treatment, forest health, erosion control, and fisheries issues.

Resource Conservation Districts (RCDs)

<http://www.carcd.org/>

RCDs assist with implementation of resource conservation projects on private and public lands.

University of California Cooperative Extension Service

<http://ucanr.org/CES.CEA.shtml>

Provides technical assistance to landowners on farm management and environmental protection.

State and Federal Programs

The following programs provide financial and/or technical assistance.

Department of Fish and Game

Fishery Restoration Grants Program

<http://www.dfg.ca.gov/nafwb/fishgrant.html>

Grants to improve or restore salmon and steelhead populations through fishery habitat improvement projects, cooperative fish-rearing programs, and public education.

California Landowner Incentive Program

<http://www.dfg.ca.gov/lands/lip/index.html>

Assists with the enhancement of riparian, wetland, and native grassland habitats by providing participating landowners with annual incentive payments in return for implementing habitat management plans that benefit special status species.

Private Lands Management Program

<http://www.dfg.ca.gov/hunting/deer/plm.html>

Allows landowners to offer fishing and hunting beyond traditional seasons while enhancing and safeguarding habitat for wildlife. Also helps develop nonhunting activities such as bird watching, photography, camping, and hiking.

Wildlife Conservation Board

<http://www.wcb.ca.gov/index.html>

An independent board within the Department of Fish and Game with authority and funding to carry out an acquisition and development program for wildlife conservation. The board offers grants for conservation and restoration of oak woodlands, inland wetlands, riparian habitat, rangelands, and grasslands.

Department of Conservation

California Farmland Conservancy Program

<http://www.consrv.ca.gov/DLRP/cfcp/index.htm>

Provides grant funding for projects that use and support agricultural conservation easements for protection of agricultural lands.

California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection

Forest Legacy Program

http://www.fire.ca.gov/php/rsrc-mgt_forestryassistance_legacy.php

Accepts permanent conservation easements from willing landowners on private forestlands that are at risk of being converted to nonforest uses.

California Forest Stewardship Program

<http://ceres.ca.gov/foreststeward/index.html>

Provides technical and financial assistance to influence positive changes to forestland management.

California Forest Improvement Program

<http://www.fire.ca.gov/ResourceManagement/CFIP.asp>

Encourages private and public investment in, and improved management of, California's forestlands and resources.

Vegetation Management Program

http://www.fire.ca.gov/php/rsrc-mgt_vegetationmanagement.php

Covers the liability, helps plan for, and conducts prescribed burn on private land to control unwanted brush and other vegetation that create wildfire hazards.

State Water Resources Board

Nonpoint Source Pollution Control Program

<http://www.swrcb.ca.gov/nps/>

Provide grants to municipalities, local public agencies, and nonprofit organizations for projects to reduce nonpoint source pollution.

State Revolving Loan Program and other funding programs

http://www.swrcb.ca.gov/funding/#funding_programs

Funds projects to reduce pollution loading to surface water or groundwater.

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Partners for Fish and Wildlife

<http://www.fws.gov/partners/>

Provides technical information and assistance to help landowners improve the quantity and quality of wetlands, riparian habitat, native grasslands, and other important fish and wildlife habitats.

Anadromous Fish Restoration Program

<http://www.delta.dfg.ca.gov/afrp/>

Assists partners and provides cost-share funding to develop and implement projects that increase natural production of chinook salmon, steelhead, striped bass, American shad, and white and green sturgeon.

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

Nonpoint Source Implementation Grant (319 Program)

<http://www.epa.gov/owow/nps/cwact.html>

Provides funding for watershed management and implementation projects to reduce, eliminate, or prevent water pollution and to enhance water quality.

Farm Service Agency (FSA)

Conservation Reserve Program (CRP)

<http://www.fsa.usda.gov/dafp/cepd/crp.htm>

Provides annual rental payments and cost-share assistance to establish long-term resource-conserving covers on eligible cropland.

Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP)

<http://www.fsa.usda.gov/dafp/cepd/crep.htm>

Provides incentive payments for agricultural landowners for instituting specific conservation practices.

Debt for Nature Program (also known as the Debt Cancellation Conservation Contract Program)

<http://www.fsa.usda.gov/pas/publications/facts/html/dfn01.htm>

Landowners with FSA loans may qualify for cancellation of a portion of their indebtedness in exchange for a conservation contract with a term of 50, 30, or 10 years.

Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)

The NRCS offers 11 programs that provide technical and/or financial assistance. A complete list is available on the Web: <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs>. Examples are:

Conservation of Private Grazing Lands

<http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/cpgl>

Technical assistance for grazing land management.

Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program

<http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/whip/>

Technical assistance and up to 75 percent cost-share assistance to establish and improve fish and wildlife habitat.

Wetlands Reserve Program

<http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/wrp>

Allows landowners to sell easements to the Department of Agriculture and receive cost-share assistance to restore and protect wetlands.

Environmental Quality Incentives Program

<http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/eqip>

Provides technical, financial, and educational assistance to address natural resource needs and objectives.

Conservation Security Program

<http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/csp>

Provides financial and technical assistance to promote the conservation and improvement of soil, water, air, energy, plant and animal life, and other conservation purposes on tribal and private working lands.

Grassland Reserve Program

<http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/grp>

Assists landowners with protection, restoration, and enhancement of grasslands.